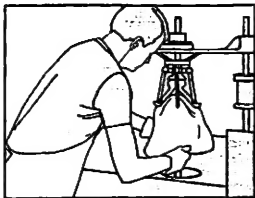


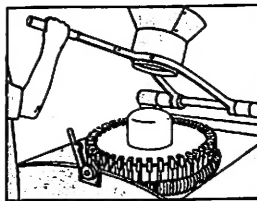
How a Felt Hat Is Made



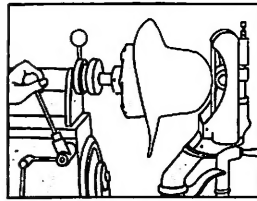
Coning. Fur or wool fibers are formed around a cone to produce the felt for a hat. The felt is peeled from the cone, above.



Stretching. After the felt has been shrunk to hat size, it is stretched into roughly the shape of a hat, above.



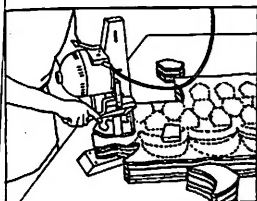
Blocking. A blocking machine, above, shapes the crown and brim. The hat is washed in cold water to set its shape.



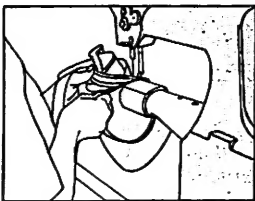
Pounding. The hat is pounded (sandpapered) to give it a smooth finish, above. The brim is then trimmed.

WORLD BOOK Illustrations; courtesy Stetson Hat Co.; Danbury Hat Co.

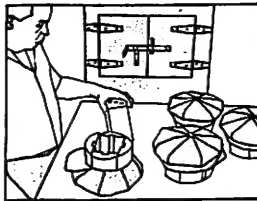
How a Sewn Hat Is Made



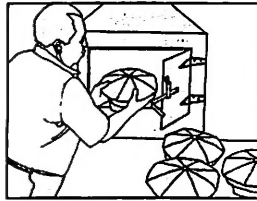
Cutting several layers of fabric, above, produces the pieces for a number of hats.



Sewing. After the pieces of the crown have been sewn together, the brim is sewn on.



Blocking. Hats are prepared for shaping by fitting blocks of wood in the crown of each one.



Steaming. The hats are placed in a steam chamber, which sets their final shape.

WORLD BOOK Illustrations; courtesy Star Hat Co.

cone-shaped hat called a *hennin*. This hat measured from 3 to 4 feet (0.9 to 1.2 meters) high and had a long, floating veil. The *Gainsborough hat* became popular with both men and women in the late 1700's. It had a wide brim and was decorated with feathers and ribbons.

Why People Wear Hats

People wear hats for three main reasons: (1) protection, (2) communication, and (3) decoration.

Protection. People first began to wear hats to protect themselves from the climate. In hot, sunny climates, wide-brimmed hats provide shade from the sun. Many Mexicans wear such hats, called *sombreros*, which are made of felt or straw. In cold climates, people often wear fur or wool hats. The Lapps of extreme northern Europe, for example, wear tight-fitting wool hats that have earflaps. In some regions, people wear a variety of protective hats, depending on the season. They may wear a fur hat in winter, a rain hat in spring or fall, and a wide-brimmed hat in summer.

Hats also provide protection in certain activities. Construction workers, football players, military personnel, and people in many other fields wear metal or plastic helmets for protection from injury.

Communication. Hats can communicate various things about the people who wear them. The hats of coal miners, cowboys, firemen, and matadors indicate the wearer's occupation. Students may wear a *mortarboard*—a stiff, flat hat with a tassel—to show they are graduating from high school or college. Many clowns wear colorful, ridiculous hats to express fun and happiness.

Decoration. Most people wear a hat that they believe makes them look attractive, though the hat's main

purpose may be protection or communication. Much protective headgear, such as fur hoods and rain hats, is both attractive and stylish. Even the caps of police officers and military personnel are designed to improve the wearer's appearance. Certain decorative hats are worn as a tradition. In Scotland, for example, people wear a cap called a *tam-o'-shanter* that is part of their national costume. Many people change their style of hat from time to time because they feel more attractive when keeping up with the latest fashions.

The Hat Industry

The United States makes more hats than any other nation. It produces about 60 million hats yearly, of which about 6 million are exported for sale in other countries. Hat sellers in the United States import more than 2 million hats annually from such countries as France, Great Britain, and Italy. The major U.S. hat manufacturing centers include Dallas, New York City, and St. Louis and St. Joseph in Missouri.

An important part of the hat industry is the manufacture of hats for women. The design, production, and sale of women's hats is called *millinery*. This term comes from the name of the city of Milan, Italy, a leading producer of women's hats. Millinery includes about 20 per cent of the hat industry.

Hat Materials. Hats are made of a variety of natural and man-made materials. The natural materials include cotton, felt, fur, leather, silk, straw, and wool. Among the synthetic substances used for hats are imitation fur, imitation leather, plastics, and such fabrics as nylon and polyester.

The materials used in making hats vary among countries and regions, depending on such factors as the